



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

**Department of Commerce and Insurance
Commissioner Paula Flowers**

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL SUES NASHVILLE RESIDENT FOR ALLEGED
UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES**

The State of Tennessee has filed suit against a Nashville resident accused of engaging in the unauthorized practice of law across the state.

The defendant, Jaffton B. "Jay" Richardson, was served with a lawsuit Thursday in jail after being arrested on related charges. In the civil lawsuit, the Attorney General alleges Richardson has violated the Tennessee Unauthorized Practice and Improper Conduct Act and the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act by soliciting to provide legal services, giving legal advice, preparing a variety of legal documents, and attempting to represent "clients" in court without a law license.

"We appreciate the hard work of the District Attorneys General," said Attorney General Paul G. Summers. "In addition to our civil lawsuit, at least three District Attorneys General have criminal charges pending against Mr. Richardson."

The complaint alleges Richardson took money from residents in several parts of the state in exchange for the promise of performing legal services for them, whether he attempted to provide the services or not. The lawsuit alleges Richardson, who has never been licensed to practice law in Tennessee, also represented "clients" in both criminal and civil courts.

The State contends that making misleading statements as to his ability to perform legal services to secure clients is deceptive and unfair to consumers and violates the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act. The State is asking the court to stop the defendant from engaging in the alleged unlawful conduct, to provide restitution to consumers, to assess civil penalties, and other relief.

Mary Clement, Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, said, "If you are unsure if someone is licensed to practice law in Tennessee, there are a number of resources available, such as the Board of Professional Responsibility, to verify the attorney you want to use is legitimate."

You can contact the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility to verify your attorney is licensed and active, and whether this person has ever been publicly disciplined by calling (615) 361-7500 or toll-free at 1-800-486-5714.

If you decide to seek legal advice and do not know a lawyer, get recommendations from friends, co-workers or family members. Another alternative is a Lawyer Referral Service. State and local bar associations offer this service and you can schedule a consultation with a lawyer in your area. Referral services are available in East Tennessee: (865) 522-7501; Middle or West Tennessee: (615) 242-6456; and Southeast Tennessee: (423) 756-3222.

It is not known how many Tennessee consumers have been misled by Jaffton B. "Jay" Richardson. If you have any complaints or information about the defendant, please contact the Attorney General's Office at (615) 741-1671 or 1-877-275-7396. You may also want to contact your local District Attorney General's Office.